

PANHANDLE HOME HEALTH

A Division of the Panhandle Health District

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Mission

To provide compassionate, caring services that enhance the quality of life and the independent function of the residents with home health needs in the five northern counties of Idaho.

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Exceptional Service for 40-plus years

PHD's Home Health Division celebrates 40 years of service this year, which makes it the longest serving and most experienced home health program in the five northern counties.

Panhandle Home Health is non-profit, a rarity in the burgeoning home health field. In the five northern counties, the only non-profit, Medicare-certified home health services offered are through Panhandle Home Health and Bonner General Hospital.

"We're seeing an increase in the need for Home Health services because of the growing senior population in our area," says Mary DeTienne, PHD's Home Health Division director and a member of the National Association of Home Care board.

Panhandle Home Health takes its care to northern Idaho's cities as well as its remote hideaways.

Panhandle Home Health won national recognition for four consecutive years from Avatar International, a consulting, service and research firm that surveys customer satisfaction in health care.

The survey is voluntary, but DeTienne never hesitated about participating. "We want to know that we make a difference in the home care needs of our patients," she says.

For the same reason, Panhandle Home Health chose to participate in a national study to reduce the number of home health patients who return to the hospital for acute care.

Qualis Health, a private and non-profit



healthcare quality improvement organization, conducted the three-month study. Panhandle Home Health was one of 113 home health service providers in 11 states to participate.

Panhandle Home Health nurses began assessing what factors beyond the immediate problem might put patients back in the hospital. Then they created a care plan that considered all the risks.

"We were able to determine most patients' risk of readmission to the hospital within the first two weeks," says Joyce Bergen, quality improvement coordinator for Panhandle Home Health. "We're below the national average. The risk assessment really does help."

For information on Panhandle Home Health, call 415-5160. To compare home health services offered throughout northern Idaho, go to www.medicare.gov and select the Home Health Compare option.

November is National Home Care Month

Celebrate at Panhandle Health District's Open House, 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., Friday, Nov. 21. Free flu shots to the first 30, chili and cornbread, Home Health telemonitor demonstrations. Bring a can of food for area food banks.

Panhandle Home Health

State-of-the-Art Telemonitors in Use

Lisa Cramer, a Panhandle Home Health registered nurse, checks her patient's vital signs every day at her desk with the aid of a Honeywell HomMed Patient Monitor. The radio-sized monitor enables patients to record their weight, blood pressure, oxygen saturation level, heart rate and temperature daily by themselves and transmit the information via computer to PHD.

PHD has five telemonitors it acquired in 2007 to benefit patient care. The monitors enable nurses to assess a patient's stability daily and react quickly to problems.

They also save nurses' time for more patient care.

The monitors enhance Home



Health services and give patients more confidence in their care. They include a blood pressure cuff, finger clip to measure oxygen levels and flat digital scale. The monitor guides patients through the process and are programmed to ask the patient certain questions.

A quick glance at her computer screen tells Lisa immediately if her patient needs her attention. PHD disconnects monitors once patients are stable. Using the monitors adds nothing to patient expenses. The monitors work only with landline phones.

Panhandle Home Health Therapy Team

Panhandle Home Health contracts with local therapists to deliver needed therapy to homebound patients in cities and rural areas in the five northern counties. A registered physical, occupational and/or speech therapist is an essential player in a patient's recovery plan of care.

Home Care Promotes Healing

Much scientific evidence indicates that patients heal more quickly at home.

(from **21 Reasons Home Care Still Pays**)



Kelly Armstrong, Mindy Weber, Erica Chvilicek, Laurie Stafford, Cathleen Gephart, Eydie Kendall, Coleen Watkins, Brett Barnes

Meet Our Skilled Home Health Staff



Michelle Reiss is a nurse manager with Panhandle Health District Home Health Division. After working for years as a team leader, Michelle was promoted in 2001 to a supervisor because she served her skilled nursing homebound patients with the utmost professional care. As a nursing supervisor she sets clear quality standards and measurements that

everyone can understand. She measures success based on data and holds herself and others accountable for standards.

Michelle consistently demonstrates a thorough understanding of her job description and duties. She takes the initiative to do extra work and is always willing to volunteer for new assignments. Michelle demonstrates commitment, loyalty and outstanding work ethics.

Avatar Award for Excellence...Again

Panhandle Home Health earned its fourth consecutive award for exemplary healthcare service quality for 2007 from Avatar International Inc., a leader in measuring patient expectations in healthcare.

Home Health exceeded expectations for 95 percent of its surveyed patients in quality of care, reliability and personalized care.

"The hallmark of exceptional service to patients is to consistently meet or exceed their expectations—not always an easy task. Panhandle Health District has demonstrated that it exceeds its patients' expectations in a tangible and measurable manner," said David Medvedeff, Avatar CEO. "I congratulate Panhandle Health District for its continued and impressive efforts to put patients first."

